

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02
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R 221410Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8573
INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION SINAI
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
DIA WASHDC
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE

S E C R E T CAIRO 13912

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EG, LY, MOPS
SUBJECT: PROPAGANDA DOWNTURN

REF: CAIRO 13646

1. EGYPTIAN/LIBYAN PROPAGANDA WAR HAS BEEN RELATIVELY
QUIET SINCE AUGUST 17 MEDIA ATTACK ON QADHAFI (REFTEL).
SUBSEQUENT ARTICLES HAVE BEEN SPORADIC AND RELATIVELY
MILD, REFLECTING OBVIOUS GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE.

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2. EXAMPLE OF THIS WAS LOCAL REPORTING OF RAUL CASTRO'S
VISIT TO ALGERIA AND LIBYA (?), CARRIED ON FIRST PAGE
ARABIC DAILIES AUGUST 18. PRESS CONNECTED CUBAN LEADER'S TRAVEL
WITH "SOVIET PLOT" INCITE INCIDENTS BETWEEN EGYPT AND
LIBYA, AS WELL AS WITH VIOLENCE AMONG OTHER AFRICAN
STATES. BUT, IN CONTRAST WITH RECENT PRESS TREATMENT
SIMILAR ISSUES, ARTICLES CONTAINED NO AD HOMINEM REFERENCES

TO LIBYAN LEADER.

3. SIMILARLY, AUGUST 21 SAVAGING OF FORMER AHRAH EDITOR MUHAMMAD HAYKAL BY AKHBAR CHAIRMAN MOUSE SABRI DWELT ONLY IN PASSING WITH ALLEGATION THAT HAYKAL PERFORMING AT QADHAFI BEHEST. AKHBAR CLAIMED HAYKAL CARRYING OUT SOVIET/LIBYAN DIRECTIVE TO DEFAME EGYPT, BUT DIT NOT BELABOR POINT.

4. AUGUST 22 PRESS NOTED, WITHOUT COMMENT, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION STATEMENT THAT 1,000 TEACHERS HAVE REFUSED RETURN TO COMPLETE LIBYAN CONTRACTS. MINISTRY WILL ENDEAVOR FIND ALTERNATE POSTINS ELSEWHERE IN ARAB WORLD. PRIORITY MINISTRY REPORTEDLY WILL ACCORD THIS SEARCH COULD INFLUENCE DECISIONS OF OTHER TEACHERS RE RETURN TO LIBYA.

5. TAKFIR TRIALS ARE SCHEDULED BEGIN BEFORE MILITARY COURTS-MARTIAL AUGUST 23. IN VIEW PAST ALLEGATIONS, AND FACT COURTS-MARTIAL WILL BE PUBLIC AFFAIRS, IT MAY PROVE DIFFICULT--ALTHOUGH NOT IMPOSSIBLE--TO KEEP PRESS COMMENTARY ON LIBYA LOW KEYED.

6. COMMENT: RECENT MEDIA PLAY ON LIBYA NOTABLE FOR MARKED DECREASE IN QUANTITY OF COVERAGE AND FOR LOWER LEVEL VITRIOLIC CONTENT. MINISTER OF HEALTH
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DR. IBRAHIM GAMIL BADRAN TOLD AMBASSADOR THIS DONE ON GOVERNMENT INSTRUCTIONS.

7. FOR THE MOMENT, THEREFORE, THERE IS A LULL IN EGYPTIAN PUBLIC MEDIA ATTACKS ON LIBYA. THE REASON FOR THIS SEEMS TO BE THAT GOE BELIEVES A MILITARY ARRANGEMENT HAS BEEN WORKED OUT WITH LIBYA, SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF CHIEFS OF STATE BOTH COUNTRIES, CALLING FOR DISENGAGEMENT ALONG THE FORNT LINES. WHILE THIS AGREEMENT IS BEING STUDIED BY QADHAFI, GOE SEEMS WILLING TO ABATE PROPAGANDA WAR. FACT REMAINS, HOWEVER, THAT EGYPT STILL HAS STATIONED IN WESTERN DESERT ADEQUATE MILITARY FORCES NECESSARY FOR RENEWAL OF FIGHTING AT GREATLY EXPANDED SCALE IF THIS SHOULD PROVE NECESSARY. SO FAR AS EMBASSY AWARE, ALTHOUGH ALERT LEVEL HAS BEEN GENERALLY LOWERED FOR EGYPTIAN MILITARY UNITS IN FRONT-LINE AREAS, THERE HAS YET BEEN NO DEPLOYMENT TO REAR AREAS OR TO CUSTOMARY ENCAMPMENTS. NOR IS IT LIKELY THIS WILL TAKE PLACE UNTIL SADAT IS CONVINCED THAT QADHAFI ACCEPTS DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT CONCEPT AND INTENDS HONOR IT. SADAT'S VIEWS THAT QADHAFI REMAINS A THREAT TO THE ME PEACE EFFORT, IS

A SOVIET SURROGATE AND CONTINUES ACTIVELY TO ENCOURAGE
TERRORISM AND SUBVERSION IN ME AND AFRICA ARE UNCHANGED.
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Message Attributes

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